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Barnett Extends Convict's Leave

C'A — 3/10/62 ✓

Lee Countian Has Been On Leave From Parchman Since Last June

From The Commercial Appeal
Jackson, Miss., Bureau

JACKSON, Miss., March 9.—Coy D. Christian of Tupelo, on "leave" from the Mississippi penitentiary since last June, Friday was granted an additional 30 days by Gov. Ross Barnett.

Christian was sentenced in Itawamba County in April of 1960 to serve two years for false pretense and was granted his initial leave a year after he reached the penitentiary at Parchman to begin serving his sentence.

Christian's first leave, authorized by letter from the Governor to Prison Supt. Fred Jones, was for 20 days. At its expiration another 20 days was granted and then a series of extensions, including the latest.

Supt. Jones, who reported the latest leave and the first record of Christian's releases for recording in Secretary of State Heber Ladner's office, said the extension was requested by two commissioners of Tupelo (not named) and the Rev. J. I. Berryhill, pastor of the East Tupelo Baptist Church. It noted that Christian "is gainfully employed and is supporting his wife and six children."

Meanwhile, records in the secretary of state's office showed that Cecil L. Gilmer, who was granted one of the letter-authorized leaves three and one-half years after he began serving a life sentence for the murder of his wife in Rankin County, is due back at Parchman Saturday from his latest 60-day leave.

Gilmer was sentenced in July of 1956 for the fatal shooting of his former wife on a bus which operates between Jackson and the state mental hospital at nearby Whitfield where she was employed.

Gilmer's first leave for 10 days was granted in December of 1959, and his record shows others for 43 days between July of 1960 and December of 1960 before his latest "extended leave" which began in March of 1961.

Since the March leave, Gilmer has been given 12 extensions ranging from 10 to 60 days, one picking up after the other expired.